

CPS Human Resource Services

Walking on Sunshine

An Extraordinary Company with Extraordinary Employees



Pathways to Excellence

CPS employees tell
their stories on why
their company is the
greatest place to work

Commitment
Dedication
Excellence

CPS Executive team leads CPS to success
2004 Sacramento Workplace Excellence Leader Award

CPS Human Resource Services (CPS) is a self-supporting governmental agency committed to improving human resources in the public sector throughout North America.

CPS is also an extraordinary place to work.

When the opportunity to apply for the SWEL awards came along, some of us sent out a call to our colleagues, asking them to submit answers to the essays. The following are their answers. They are stories. They speak in different voices, but they all tell of passion and commitment from the organization, its employees and its leadership, to ensuring the well being of everyone within CPS.

We decided to put these stories together as a collection—a magazine. It seemed to us that to distill them into one voice would be to diminish them. CPS is an extraordinary place to work, and the best way to express that is through the voice of its people.



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Cover:
Jerry Greenwell, Pamela Stewart and Ed Cole, the CPS Executive Team, who celebrate during the highly successful 2003 employee offsite meeting held at the Radisson Hotel.

CPS Culture Abounds in Endless Opportunities for Employees

Training programs and career growth opportunities plentiful

What unique training programs, retention efforts, and career growth opportunities does your company provide for employees? How are these programs, opportunities, and efforts communicated to employees, and how does the company measure and/or ensure effectiveness?

People stay with CPS because CPS works hard for its people. The organization values its employees and offers a positive atmosphere with competitive benefits, training opportunities and opportunities for advancement. Despite its rapid growth, CPS maintains a flat structure, allowing concern and support for individual employees and their goals. The encouraging atmosphere exemplified by upper management is modeled throughout CPS. CPS strives to maintain a supportive, team-oriented culture.

CPS' commitment to the professional development of individual workers within the workplace keeps employees from searching outside the organization for advancement. CPS often trains employees for new positions rather than hiring externally to offer career mobility and advancement for current job incumbents. Over the past year, more than a dozen people have advanced into new positions created by new business opportunities at CPS. These positions were advertised internally through e-mail, general staff meetings and the CPS Intranet. CPS also uses transfers across departments and extensive training methods to provide job variety, enhance employee satisfaction, and reduce employee turnover.

Personnel development, education and training are also critical to CPS. Education and training is one component of every employee's annual performance plan. CPS offers each employee \$2,500 yearly for academic work completed with a C average or higher and fully funds expenses for a Master's program as part of its manager development initiative. This allows CPS employees a chance they might not

otherwise have to complete their education. IT certifications are also highly encouraged. CPS provides IT employees with 80 hours of technical training each year. This training is of the employee's choosing and is fully compensated by CPS. CPS provides the employee with work time to study for technical certifications and also compensates the employee for the test. Employees are also encouraged to participate in individual training seminars and workshops throughout the year.

Employees themselves may organize training work groups for specific purposes such as the MS Outlook training class presented by employee Janet Fulp, for the purpose of acquainting more CPS employees with the uses of the software program. As well, interested employees were given the opportunity recently to sit in on selected HR Academy classes put on by CPS for public agencies. Wherever the opportunity presents itself and time, work load and budget allow, employees are encouraged to broaden their skills and understanding.

By maintaining salary competitiveness and bonuses, CPS is able to curb turnover within the organization. Individual employees are rewarded for organizational success by receiving a Results-Oriented Pay for Performance (ROPP) bonus each year and Team-Based Pay for Performance (TBPP) bonuses twice a year. Annual salary adjustments are made to maintain internal equity and external competitiveness. Unlike many public entities, CPS benchmarks the organization's pay scales yearly to ensure a competitive edge with public, private, and non-profit agencies.

Employee interaction and bonding are fostered through formal social events such as picnics, celebrations, holiday parties, golf and bowling tournaments and informal gatherings organized by employees such as hiking, camping, rafting, and birthday luncheons. This environment of fun, mutual respect and cooperation facilitates employee satisfaction and retention.

The Road to Becoming a CEO at CPS

They say that things happen when you least expect them. That is true in the case of CPS finding and hiring Jerry Greenwell. I was a Supervisor overseeing the Merit System contract for the California State Personnel Board and working with the Monterey County Department of Social Services. I met Jerry and worked closely with several of his peers and administrators in Monterey.

CPS always encourages its employees at every level to be on the lookout for quality potential employees. We feel that employees make the best recruiters and can best tell the story about what it is like to work at CPS. So when I heard that Jerry's wife was working at Squaw Valley and that he was getting tired of the commute between Monterey and Tahoe, I talked to him about the possibility of coming to work for me at CPS. We talked about the skills and experience he could bring to CPS as his prior work experience, like mine, had not been in Human Resources. This was the best hiring decision I ever made! He came to CPS and soon demonstrated his leadership potential. After a few years in a consultant role, Jerry moved on to manage each of the other operational divisions of CPS. He managed a wide variety of operations such as accounting, test rental, test development, clerical support, print shop and mailroom. CPS was the catalyst for his career development; I only made the initial introduction. Jerry possessed a strong foundation of the qualities and competencies that CPS encourages and cultivates, but it took the leadership within CPS to foster and guide his development.

CPS makes it very easy for employees to realize their potential through continuous learning opportunities and involvement in professional associations. Jerry embraced these opportunities by obtaining his Master's from John F. Kennedy University, and certifications from the American Leadership Forum, and the International Public Management Association for Human Resources. He shares his knowledge with me, the other managers, and staff of CPS every day by example and by truly putting those practices that he has learned and developed over the years into practice in everything that he says and does.

Jerry has a commitment to our community and has been active and on the board of organizations such as Crossroads. CPS encourages employees to give back to their community and has just embarked on a new endeavor entitled the CPS Community Action Network (CPS CAN) that will mobilize and focus all the individual efforts that have been made by CPS employees over the years.

I'm so proud to be able to tell you that Jerry went on to become the Deputy Director of CPS and now is one of the Executive Directors. His story demonstrates that CPS is an organization that gives every employee the opportunity to excel and to achieve whatever goals they have set for their careers and personal development.

Susan Helland, Senior Manager

CPS Programs and Benefits are Driving Force Behind Company Success

What unique policies and benefits does your company offer? What are the goals and/or philosophies behind policy and benefit development?

The CPS Community Action Network (CAN) committee has just rolled out a new initiative that benefits not only CPS employees, but also the communities in which they live! As part of this initiative, the Committee is allowing employees to use company time to complete volunteer work with charitable organizations. To take this commitment even further, CPS will also match 50% of employee hours for up to 8 hours a quarter. This translates to 32 hours a year per employee. In addition, the Committee will begin to disperse funds to charitable organizations that support our communities to improve where we live and work.

CPS has long realized its greatest resource: its employees. Because of that, CPS has raised the bar in terms of benefits to its employees and the community. CPS provides excellent staff benefits in an effort to be responsive to needs and present a supportive environment. Just a few of CPS' long-standing benefits include:

- ❖ CPS paid holidays, personal leave, long-term sick leave, jury duty leave and bereavement leave
- ❖ CPS contributed health and dental insurance, vision insurance and tax-deferred flexible spending account (also includes coverage to domestic partners)
- ❖ CPS paid life insurance
- ❖ CPS contributed retirement plan through Public Employee's Retirement System, two deferred compensation plans (457 accounts)
- ❖ CPS contributed MediCare
- ❖ CPS paid workers' compensation and unemployment insurance, disability insurance
- ❖ CPS contributed tuition reimbursement up to \$2,500 each year
- ❖ CPS paid employee assistance program

One thing that makes CPS an amazing organization is that employees from all levels of the organization are involved in policy creation. These policies are ultimately based on CPS' vision and values, which include:

- ❖ Satisfy the client
- ❖ Value ethical behavior
- ❖ Support individual employee well being
- ❖ Commit to organizational success
- ❖ Work as a team
- ❖ See the positive
- ❖ Value diversity
- ❖ Pay for performance
- ❖ Develop a broad spectrum of markets and services
- ❖ Develop a deep, well-rounded, knowledgeable and experienced staff
- ❖ Develop economic soundness

The driving force behind policy and benefit development is the value CPS places on the need for every employee to have the opportunity to experience dignity, meaning, and purpose through his/her work.



I have been working at CPS for over 18 years. Through the years CPS has provided many different opportunities for both staff and myself to improve and develop our technical skills. Not only has CPS worked to develop our professional expertise, they have also supported and encouraged staff to get involved in our local community organizations. Being involved in my community is something that is very important to me.

Through CPS, I have increased my community awareness and identified different volunteer opportunities not only for myself but also for my children. My children have prepared box lunches for many United Cerebral Palsy fundraisers and passed out snacks at several Sacramento Valley AIDS Walks. On different occasions, I have cleaned up a backyard for a group home, read to seniors, donated reading material to a nursing home, assisted agency staff with their annual picnic, and helped with various other volunteer projects.

I have participated on the CPS United Way Gifts of Love Project for many years and the last several years I have chaired this wonderful cause. The Gifts of Love Project team chooses a group, individual, or family in need and helps make their Holiday wishes become a reality through generous donations from staff. I volunteer for this project for the personal fulfillment and the ability to network within CPS and the community. This project and the CPS Grant Policy Project have certainly had a positive effect directly related to my job—enhancing leadership, organization, and communication skills.

Susan Yee, Test Program Coordinator

CPS Values Promote and Encourage Work/Life Balance

How does your company promote work/life balance among employees? What specific work/life initiatives has your company undertaken in the last two years?

CPS provides its employees with the necessary tools to discover the intricate balance between their quality of work life and personal life. In fact one of the organization's core themes includes quality of work life in addition to organizational financial health and client satisfaction. This type of atmosphere recognizes and provides consideration for the "whole" person, while fostering an environment of accountable participation and individual ownership for organizational processes, policies, and successes.

Coworkers assist and support employees in need. Representatives from every department at every level develop most policies through committee representation. Accountable participation gives employees an environment where individuality and involvement are valued.

CPS' institution of personal leave in place of what other organizations would call sick leave and vacation leave offers a greater flexibility for employees to integrate their personal and professional responsibilities. As an added incentive, employees who have accumulated many hours of personal leave may sell hours back to the organization on a quarterly basis, provided the employee has used a minimum number of hours and retains a minimum number of hours as well. This also demonstrates the value CPS places on personal time off for employees. Traditionally, CPS also expresses additional appreciation by providing four extra hours of administrative leave during the holiday season.

In addition to flexibility with personal leave, many CPS employees have flexible work schedules as well. Work hours may begin earlier or later to avoid traffic or accommodate personal schedules, with the approval of the supervisor or manager. Exempt employees may compress their work schedules within a two-week pay period, within the constraints of workload demands. Many individuals find telecommuting beneficial and helpful in scheduling family events and medical visits, or providing seclusion to focus on important projects or reports.



Employee Communication is Key to CPS Success

How does your company effectively communicate philosophies, business strategies, and performance, financial success and company news to employees?

CPS has an organizational culture which values and institutionalizes multi-directional communication. Employee involvement and participation are at the heart of the communication strategy and underlie CPS' business model and philosophy. While traditional communication methods such as e-mails, internal and external websites, newsletters, annual report, and staff meetings are used to disseminate critical information and generate employee dialog, it is the innovative non-traditional communication approaches that truly define the CPS culture.

The communication socialization process begins by having all new employees

attend three executive management meetings. Attendance at these meetings is used to introduce new employees to organizational philosophies, values, and business strategies, as well as to demystify the management process. New employees may be asked to facilitate an executive management meeting as a way to operationalize the CPS philosophy of accountable participation. Dissemination of the communication philosophy continues by having employees attend a Board of Directors meeting.

More formalized participation in the communication process is achieved by having employees serve on a variety of internal committees. The committee structure is used extensively in order to obtain employee input when establishing or amending organizational policies and procedures, developing the organization's five-year goals and business plan, brainstorming operational improvements, and recommending new business opportunities. Through committee participation, employees become partners with management and develop a vested interest in business decisions.

Managers' doors are always open and comments and ideas are welcomed from all employees.

A final communication technique, which has proven to be an integral component of the CPS communication model, is the annual organization-wide off-site meeting. This day-long event, which includes activities such as team building, strategic planning, and visioning for the future, is used to develop a shared understanding of and commitment to the organization's mission, vision, and values. Employees are flown in for this event from CPS offices nationwide. This past year the off-site was the day before the annual CPS picnic, so that out-of-town employees could attend both.

The CPS communication model and philosophy are embedded in the performance plan of each employee within the organization. Making organizational communication a highly visible and important aspect of the performance planning and evaluation process helps ensure that effective communication remains a valued ingredient of CPS' organizational culture.

Employees Make the Difference— One Employee at a Time

What programs, initiatives and/or events does your company have in place to build morale?

The atmosphere at CPS can be felt when you first walk in. Something is different. This isn't "business as usual," or rather business as usual at CPS is far from the usual model.

In trying to identify programs or initiatives unique to CPS, there is more than just the official "program" to be showcased. Many companies offer "programs", and CPS does too. However, the difference lies in the employees' application and fulfillment of the program. More than that, the cultural essence of CPS – from the top down—encourages the use of and creation of "new" ways to make life better in the workaday world.

Let me take you on a tour of a typical day at CPS. This tour can be started with a visit to the gym. Treadmills, weights, mats on the floor... it's unmistakable that it's used daily. So are the showers (thankfully!).

Leaving the gym area holiday decorations can be seen everywhere. Each cubicle is personalized with pictures of family and friends and trips that offer testimony to rich "outside" lives.

Several kitchenettes throughout the office offer coffee, cocoa, and an assortment of teas. Perpetually refilled candy dishes are evident, as well as clever posters, and magnets – these work areas are "lived in." They are not cluttered or shabby, but illustrate that the people here enjoy their lives—both work and home.

The break room is always clean and cared for. People scramble to clean up after one another, loading the dishwasher, moving bottled water into the refrigerators, or making a pot of coffee. You see them chatting, laughing and watching TV. You're just as likely to find a hand-cut vegetable tray as a dozen donuts, oatmeal and fruit (or granola and yogurt) as you would pastry and cake. Healthy snacks are provided by CPS's Live Well Work Well committee to help jump start the day.

Inside, conference rooms are usually in use: birthdays, baby showers, unit meetings, training sessions, client meetings, private conferences. The rooms belong to all, and all are comfortable using them.

Back through the work areas there may be noticed piles of canned food, a box of eyeglasses, bundles of shampoo and razors, bags of dog food; all donations collected by employees for many different charitable organizations, all year long! Some employees volunteer at the Children's Home, serve food to the homeless, collect reading glasses for the indigent, or drive seniors to their appointments. Some volunteer at the Animal Shelter or organize raffles. There is even an "in-training" seeing-eye dog wandering the office. At any one time there must be a half-dozen to a dozen "charitable" drives happening.

The employee appreciation area is comfortably appointed, and is used for breaks and casual employee meetings. Nearby is the "Executive Staff," a group who are charmingly indifferent to their "Titles." They can be seen joking and laughing amongst themselves and with the staff, and you can feel their warmth and their competence. They know they have created a great place to work. They may not take "credit" for this – but this is where it all starts.

The employees at CPS not only like to work with each other, they even get together after hours! It doesn't matter if anyone "knows" you or not – you're invited: via email, at a meeting, through a co-worker, all are welcome for the many activities: river rafting, bowling, potlucks, Reno trip, baseball, basketball, football, historic Sacramento, after work gatherings, golfing, camping, art galleries, marathons, baby showers, picnics, hikes, skiing, – the variety accommodates a multitude of interests.

The culture at CPS is a precious and valued commodity. It drives the employees' productivity and commitment to excellence. Everyone works hard to earn the privileges that are granted, and takes pride in each other's efforts. For a company that has doubled its staff in the past year, the determination to maintain this "certain something" is genuine and unique. The challenges the work provides as employees continue to grow, the goal to provide escalating client satisfaction, and the joy, shared communally, that is part of the day-to-day existence, makes waking up worthwhile.

Tuition Reimbursement Program Helps Employees' Further Education Goals

When I decided to go back to school for a degree, I was extremely worried about the financial commitment. I knew that it would pay off in the long run, but in the short run I had to juggle my family's budget and account for the additional expense of tuition. Although I qualified for some financial aid, it was not enough to pay for a full year's tuition. The portion that CPS pays through the tuition reimbursement policy enables me to enroll every semester, which will allow me to earn my degree sooner!

I absolutely could not continue my education without the support of my manager. Not only does he openly encourage me to continue, but he provides me the opportunity to work a flexible schedule, enabling time for study and homework. In addition, my Manager has never refused to answer any of my questions, and the incredibly useful knowledge I have gained from him has far exceeded the knowledge I have gained from textbooks.

Support from management is important, but equally important is the support I have received from my co-workers. There are several employees who ask me for status reports on a regular basis. Their support is a great motivator for me. My fellow employees, in addition to being an inspiration, are also highly skilled and knowledgeable people. I frequently tap their expertise and years of experience and I benefit so much from talking with them.

CPS' commitment to employee satisfaction is evident in many organizational policies, but the tuition reimbursement policy specifically encourages employees to pursue their educational goals. Of course, CPS benefits as an organization as it cultivates a team of knowledgeable, skilled employees. However, the employees who take advantage of this program benefit the most because they can personally experience the joy of learning and the power of knowledge which extends past the workplace, into every part of life. CPS has made it possible for me to go back to school and it is a gift for which I am thankful.

Sue Somatis, Administrative Technician

Live Well, Work Well: A Program Devoted to Employees' Well-Being

What programs, communications, training programs, etc. help to promote employee welfare both at work and way?

Traditionally, a company's primary concern is two fold: productivity and the bottom line. Although these are important considerations, CPS believes an equally important measurement is the health and well being of its employees. A healthier employee is more productive and, as a result, improves the bottom line.

Through the Live Well/Work Well (LWWW) program, CPS fosters a workplace that promotes a healthy lifestyle and helps employees acquire and maintain positive health habits. LWWW benefits include: Fresh fruit and other healthy snacks in the mornings, valet dry cleaning services, onsite CPR training, onsite Flu shots, personal fitness training, twice-monthly chair massages, an onsite gym and a walking program. In addition, CPS sends out a monthly employee newsletter containing topical health news and tips for healthier living.

Employees who experience a sense of camaraderie tend to be healthier and happier. CPS encourages organizational unity by

promoting, both formally and informally, events such as mountain hikes, white water rafting, skiing, charity golf tournaments, and bowling tournaments.

An employee's self-esteem is an important factor when considering health and well being. CPS seeks to improve employee self-confidence and increase self-esteem by hosting onsite Weight Watchers meetings. These meetings encourage employees to get healthy and stay fit by making smart, safe, and sensible eating decisions.

In addition, CPS recognizes the importance of employee self-esteem through the implementation of two important programs: The Executive Directors' award, and The Star Awards program.

The Executive Director's award is given in recognition of an employee's meritorious efforts. The recipient demonstrates a positive and substantial impact on the organization's finances, quality of work life, and/or client satisfaction.

The Star Awards Program allows managers, supervisors, and peers to present Star Awards for performance beyond what is normally expected in such areas as teamwork, sharing knowledge, internal/external customer service, exemplifying CPS values, demonstrating initiative, and offering assistance outside the job scope. The employee receives a certificate describing how they excelled in one or more

of the above areas. This certificate has a star pin attached to it that is proudly displayed in the work areas of many employees. A copy of the certificate is also given to the employees' manager. At monthly staff meetings, a manager reads the list of all Star Award recipients and reasons why their fellow coworkers have nominated them. A name is drawn from this pool to receive a \$20 gift certificate. In addition to self-esteem, this program heightens morale for the recipient, the individual providing the nomination, and the entire team. Other organizations have been so impressed with CPS' Star Awards Program that they have adopted it for themselves.

Upon occasion, an employee or an employee's family member may find themselves in need of counseling. CPS addresses this need by funding a confidential Employee Assistance program. This program provides employees and their family members access to private and confidential therapy.

CPS also believes that an employee's personal growth also contributes to their mental well being. Education and training are not only supported by CPS but highly encouraged. Employees are encouraged to participate in workshops and training seminars throughout the year to strengthen skill sets. See side bar for a real life example of one CPS employee who is able to realize their dream by utilizing the tuition reimbursement program.

At CPS, Diversity is a Value and Part of the Company Culture

How does your company demonstrate a commitment to diversity within the workplace? What specific programs or policies has your company developed to increase the diversity of its workforce?

CPS lives diversity everyday, maintaining a high commitment across the organization. In addition to the varied clientele, CPS has an executive team primarily consisting of underrepresented groups. CPS is also the founding board member for PESA (Public Employment Services Authority) which specializes in providing skilled and

experienced executives for the public sector utilizing non-retired and retired executives without jeopardizing retirement benefits. Overall, CPS Human Resource Services provides a model to the community, as well as to our clientele. In addition to having a diverse workforce, CPS Human Resource Services submits reports to the Board of Directors and the State Personnel Board that examines diversity within the organization's current workforce. As the organization continues to expand its number of employees and contract employees throughout the nation, CPS serves and fulfills the needs of the clientele.

In addition, CPS Human Resource Services pays close attention and remains dedicated to the representation of protected groups through a utilization analysis that

identifies employment areas where there are deficiencies of protected groups in the workforce. CPS makes great strides to encourage diversity within the workforce through job postings utilizing the EDD and Veteran's Services Group websites and in various African-American, Asian, and Hispanic publications. CPS also uses minority, women-owned, and disabled veteran vendors for the organization's outsourced services, which includes legal and custodial services. Through specific efforts, the organization is able to fully utilize the workforce and in turn is more educated in providing quality services. As the available workforce continues to broaden and diversify, CPS Human Resource Services can serve as a model for other organizations that are wishing to commit themselves to diversity within their own organizations.

We at CPS Human Resource Services believe our organization demonstrates every facet of a great place to work: leadership, financial success, growth opportunities, generous work/life programs, excellent benefits, flexible work schedules, and more. Our unique corporate culture fosters a supportive environment that promotes individuality and empowerment.

We hope you will agree that CPS deserves a SWEL award.

– The CPS Team